

Cooperative Collecting Quantified: Subject Analysis of the Chinese-Language Collections at Duke University and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill



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Background

The East Asian Collection at Duke was established in the 1920s. With the growth of area studies in the 1960s, Duke and the neighboring University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill agreed to share responsibility for collecting East Asian research materials, with Duke primarily collecting Japanese-language materials and UNC focusing on Chinese-language materials. In the 1990s, expansion of the Chinese Studies program and shifts in faculty research interests led Duke to increase support for Chinese resources, resulting in the rapid development of the Chinese-language collection. As a result of their history of cooperation, the Chinese collections of the two universities have exerted mutual influence on one another.

Objective

To better understand how these two Chinese collections complement one another in terms of subject matter and usage, in order to inform future collecting practices.

Methods

- Extracted the following fields from the ILSs at the two institutions: Title, Author, Edition, Publication Date, Publisher Information, Format, Circulation Data (calendar years 2016-2018 for Duke, fiscal year 2018 for UNC), Call Number, and Library of Congress Subject Headings
- Consolidated and cleaned data categories to make them comparable between the institutions
- Added and standardized Library of Congress call numbers to operationalize subject area
- When analyzing the subject area, we only examined print materials since most electronic and multimedia formats are not assigned call numbers
- Used Tableau and Excel to perform the comparisons and visualizations

Results

Subject Area

History (D), literature (P) and social sciences (H) hold a significant place in both of these collections. Literature assumes a larger role at UNC (33.23%) in comparison with Duke (23.00%). Social sciences hold a larger place in the Duke collection—a full 20.57%, while only 7.91% for UNC. See Figure 1 for details within the major subject areas.

Circulation

The usage patterns are similar at the two institutions, though social sciences (H) circulate more at Duke and art (N) circulates more at UNC. As seen in Chart 1, the percentage of total circulation per subject area correlates with the holdings. This generally applies within subject ranges as well (for instance, BQ constitutes the majority of holdings and the majority of circulation within B for Duke). The exceptions are as follows:

- Usage of literature (P) is outsized for both institutions (199% of expected use at Duke, 144% at UNC)¹
- Art (N) is used more heavily in both collections than the holdings (107% of expected use at Duke, 172% at UNC)
- H is underutilized at both institutions (55% of expected use at Duke, 60% at UNC)

Subject Area	Findings
Language & Literature (P)	91% of UNC's language and literature collection falls in the core Chinese literature section (PL) with only 7% in the PN section (which contains drama, television and film studies, journalism and comics), while 79% of Duke collection is in PL and 17% falls into PN, demonstrating Duke's strength in film studies.
History (D)	Duke's collection focuses more heavily in modern China (DS770s), and local history (DS790s), while UNC is more evenly distributed over earlier history, especially general works (DS700s) and dynastic history (DS750s).
Social Science (H)	Social sciences (H) make up a larger part in the Duke collection. Both universities collect most heavily in "Economic History and Conditions" (HC) and "Industries. Land Use. Labor" (HD). However, UNC focuses more in "The Family. Marriage. Women" (HQ), while Duke is comparatively strong in statistics (HA).
Philosophy & Religion (B)	UNC is strongest in philosophy (B), general religion and mythology (BL) and Buddhism (BQ). Duke's collection strongly favors Buddhism (45% of its religion and philosophy collection) and has less philosophy.

Figure 1. Notable Subject Areas at Duke and UNC.

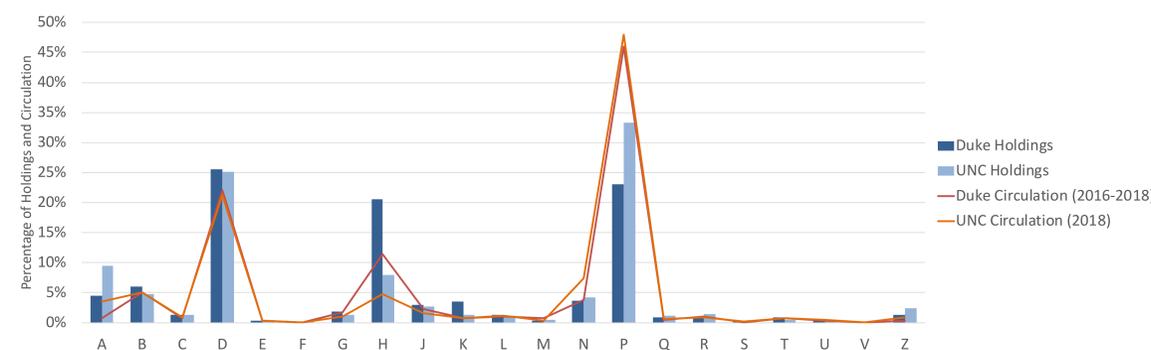


Chart 1. Holdings and Circulation at Duke and UNC by Call Number.

Conclusions

This analysis demonstrates that Duke and UNC have been successful in developing their collections along complementary trajectories. As we hypothesized, UNC (the more historic collection) focuses more in traditionally important areas of research for Chinese studies; namely, history, literature and philosophy. Duke, a younger collection diversifying and building on shared resources, is stronger in the social sciences, modern history, modern literature and popular culture. Circulation data also demonstrates that the subject areas as measured by Library of Congress Call Number are generally being used in proportion with the holdings.

Future Directions

- Analyze interlibrary loan data between Duke and UNC to see cross-usage of the collections.
- Add e-resources to the analysis. This could explain some apparent overuse and underuse of subject areas (for instance, literature could be heavily used because people are using the collection for pleasure reading and prefer to do this in print, whereas social sciences resources may be accessed more electronically.)
- Perform an in-depth analysis of one subject area (like film studies or LGBTQ studies) and analyze it in the context of a larger consortium, such as the Ivy Plus Libraries.

Acknowledgments

We'd like to thank Hsi-chu Bolick, the East Asian Studies Librarian at UNC, and her assistant Lily Kirkhoff for providing data from UNC's collection. We'd also like to thank Deirdre McCullough for her help in pulling Duke's data.

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Notes

¹Percentage of Expected Use (PEU) calculated as the percentage of total circulation divided by percentage of the total holdings for a given subject area (Mills 1982)